# Legislative Budget Analysis Proposed FY 2022 Operating and Capital Budgets Office of the County Auditor Baltimore County, Maryland

**HEARING DATE: May 17, 2021** 



# Fire Department

Fire Chief: Joanne Rund

Budget Office Analyst: Nichole Henderson

Legislative Analyst: Omeiza H. Emah

Questions to Department Sent	Thursday, April 29					
Responses Received	Friday, May 7					
Analysis considers all agency responses.						

# BALTIMORE COUNTY

# FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET ANALYSIS

# **FIRE DEPARTMENT (016)**

BUDGET SUMMARY								
		\$ in Th	ousar	ids				
PROPOSED CHANGE		GENERAL		SPECIAL		TOTAL	% Change Prior Year	
FY 2021 - 2022 Change	\$	4,023.3	\$	(1,644.1)	\$	2,379.2	2.1%	
BUDGET TRENDS								
FY 2020 Actual FY 2021 Approp. FY 2022 Request FY 2022 Budget Analysis	\$	104,576.6 108,151.5 112,174.8 <b>111,674.8</b>	\$	3,031.5 (A) 4,804.7 (B) 3,160.6 <b>3,160.6</b>	\$	107,608.1 112,956.2 115,335.4 <b>114,835.4</b>	5.0% 2.1% <b>1.7%</b>	
POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS	\$	500.0	\$	-	\$	500.0		

<sup>(</sup>A) Reflects audited expenditures \$1,905,608 greater than the amount reflected in the Executive's budget documents.

# PERSONNEL

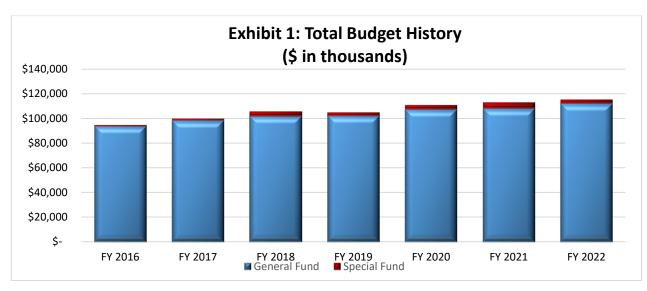
	GENERAL		SPECIAL		
	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	
PROPOSED CHANGE					
FY 2021 - 2022 Change	4	0	0	0	
BUDGET TRENDS					
FY 2020 Actual	1,066	4	16	1	
FY 2021 Approp.	1,087	4	28	1	
FY 2022 Request	1,091	4	28	1	
FY 2022 Budget Analysis	1,091	4	28	1	
POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS	0	0	0	0	
VACANCY DATA					
Positions Vacant as of April 23, 2021*					
Uniform	74	0	3	0	
Civilian	1	0	0	0	
*Provided by the Office of Budget and Finance.					

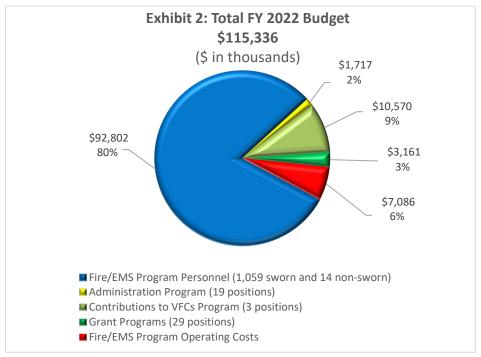
For further information contact: Office of the County Auditor Phone: (410) 887-3193

<sup>(</sup>B) Increased for three supplemental appropriations totaling \$1.4 million not reflected in the Executive's budget documents.

#### **BUDGET SUMMARY:**

The proposed FY 2022 budget for the Fire Department totals \$115.3 million, an increase of \$2.4 million, or 2.1%, over the FY 2021 budget. The General Fund portion of the budget totals \$112.2 million and increases by \$4.0 million, or 3.7%, due primarily to personnel expenses. The Special Fund portion of the budget totals \$3.2 million and decreases by \$1.6 million, or 34.2%, due primarily to the deletion of the one-time COVID-19 grant and the SAFER grant. **See Exhibits 1-3 for additional detail.** 





			thibit 3			
		FY 2022 Propose	ed Budget (\$ in	000's)		
How Much it Grows:	Ger	neral Fund	Spe	cial Fund	Total	
2021 Appropriation	\$	108,152	\$	4,805 (A)	\$ 112,957	
2022 Request		112,175		3,161	115,336	
\$ Increase/(Decrease)	\$	4,023	\$	(1,644)	\$ 2,379	
% Increase/(Decrease)		3.7%		-34.2%	2.1%	
(A) Increased for three supple	emental app	ropriations totaling \$1	.4 million not refl	ected in the Executive	's budget documents	S.
Where it Goes:						
General Fund:						
Personnel Expenses:						\$ 3,532
2% COLA effective Jui						
Increments and Longe						
Callback (large numbe				•		
Salary Review (includi	_					
Turnover (4.7% to 3.89	,				767	
4 New Positions (Equit						
		,				
2% COLA effective Jar						
Retiree Leave Payout						
Other Salary Adjustme	nts (lower s	alaries due to retireme	ents/attrition of h	igher-paid staff)	(2,588)	
Operating Expenses:						99
Service Contracts (nev	v 1 yr. cont	ract for cardiac monito	or/defibrillators a	nd monthly Telestaff fe	ees) 71	
Other Changes					28	
Volunteer Fire Companies	s					392
Subsidies					308	
LOSAP (18 additional	recipients)				56	
Other Changes					28	
General Fund Total:						4,023
Special Fund:						
Assistance to Firefighte	ers (2-year o	grant award budgeted	in FY 2021)		(205)	
SAFER					` ,	
FEMA - Assistance to	Firefighters	- COVID-19 Suppleme	ental (AFG-S) (o	ne-time))	(1,000)	
Other Changes					(69)	
Special Fund Total:						(1,644
Total:						\$ 2370

#### **OPERATING BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:**

The proposed FY 2022 budget for the Fire Department totals \$115.3 million, an increase of \$2.4 million, or 2.1%, over the FY 2021 budget. The budget includes:

**General Fund** - totals \$112.2 million and increases by \$4.0 million, or 3.7%

- \$95.8 million for Personnel Expenses an increase of \$3.5 million, or 3.9%, mainly reflecting salary enhancements (e.g., COLAs, increments and longevities, and salary review), callback, a decrease in turnover savings, and 4 new positions, offset by a decrease in retiree leave payouts (see #1, page 5)
- \$10.6 million for the Volunteer Companies an increase of approximately \$392 thousand, or 3.9%, mainly reflecting increases for subsidies (e.g., turnout gear) and LOSAP (net increase of 18 recipients; no change in \$300 monthly benefit payment)
- \$7.0 million for Operating Expenses an increase of approximately \$99 thousand, or 1.4%, mainly reflecting increases for contracts for cardiac monitor/defibrillators and Telestaff (scheduling software) fees

<u>Special Fund</u> – totals \$3.2 million and decreases by \$1.6 million, or 34.2%, mainly reflecting reductions of two grants (COVID-19 and SAFER)

#### **CAPITAL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:**

The proposed FY 2022 Capital Budget hearing will take place later today at 3:00 p.m. with a separate analysis package.

The proposed FY 2022 Capital Budget includes \$23.1 million for the following projects (see #4, page 9 for project details):

- Sparrows Point Fire Station and Police Substation (\$16.0 million)
- Washer and dryer installations at 16 career fire stations (\$4.5 million)
- Volunteer Fire Company Grant Fund (\$1.5 million)
- Land acquisition for a new Catonsville Fire Station (\$1.0 million)
- Completion of the female locker room at the Fullerton Fire Station (\$128 thousand)

#### POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS:

This analysis identifies one potential budget reduction totaling \$500,000, based on a conservative projection of Departmental reimbursable General Fund expenses under the proposed \$161 million ARPA grant program, which is scheduled for Council consideration on the May 27, 2021 agenda. Under the \$144 million CARES Act grant program (appropriated via Bill 56-20 on May 29, 2020), as of March 31, 2021, the Department received \$5.4 million in General Fund reimbursements for incurred expenses not charged directly to the County's federal grant program, including \$3.1 million reimbursed during FY 2021. FY 2021 reimbursed expenses include primarily personnel-related costs for COVID-19 related redeployments, such as salaries and overtime pay for personnel working at COVID testing sites and vaccination clinics, callback pay, substitution pay, as well as other operating costs largely related to disinfecting medic units.

#### **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:**

#### 1. Personnel

The proposed FY 2022 budget includes \$95.8 million for Personnel Expenses, an increase of \$3.5 million, or 3.9%, primarily for the following:

#### • \$1.1 million – Salary Review

Pay scale adjustments, effective January 1, 2022, in lieu of the 2% COLA:

- ➤ \$1.0 million for BCFA employees (Pay Schedule V) \$2,100 increase (995 employees)
- > \$7 thousand for FPE employees (Pay Schedule I) new step 5 added, providing a one-step increase for employees with 6 or more years of service (7 employees)
- ➤ \$3 thousand for AFSCME employees (Pay Schedule II) new step 7 added, providing a one-step increase for employees with 8 or more years of service (2 employees)

#### New Paramedic First Class EMS position

\$82 thousand - BCFA employees (Pay Schedule V) who qualified for and received supplemental pay as EMS Field Preceptors (60 members) as of June 30, 2021 (or the first opportunity thereafter) will be promoted into the new Paramedic First Class EMS position (Grade 15), and supplemental pay for EMS Field Preceptor will be removed from Pay Schedule X. Additionally, beginning on or after July 1, 2021, the rank structure and assignment of emergency medical services personnel will be reorganized to include appropriate levels of coordination.

- \$1.1 million Callback driven by the large volume of vacancies resulting from hiring delays due to COVID-19
- \$395 thousand for 4 new positions:
  - Equity Officer (\$113 thousand) Responsible for continuous monitoring of the workplace and making recommendations for system improvements to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of employees and the residents served
  - Contractual Medical Director (approximately 20 hours/week) (\$100 thousand) Assists with medical oversight, quality assurance, and correspondence with MIEMSS; and specializes in emergency medical services (EMS) operations, laws, and regulations and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD), and provides the licensure that allows the County's EMS personnel to function. The Department advised that the adopted budget will be updated to reflect the contractual status of the proposed arrangement in lieu of a full authorized position, and that Council approval will be requested, if needed, once all contractual details are finalized.
  - Safety Officer (\$94 thousand) Responds to fires and other emergencies, directs fire ground and other emergency operations (as needed), performs command safety operations on all incidents, develops/provides annual safety training, and tracks/analyzes trends of accidents, injuries, and occupation illness
  - Community And Outreach Lieutenant (\$88 thousand) Focuses on community risk reduction efforts seeking to reduce preventable fires, injury, illness, and death

#### Vacancies and Retirements

As of April 23, 2021, the Office of Budget and Finance advised that of the 1,120 authorized positions (1,092 uniformed and 32 civilian), there were 78 vacant positions (77 uniformed and 1 civilian), primarily Probationary Firefighter (36) and Fire Lieutenant (12) positions. The Department advised that during FY 2021, the number of retirements has been higher than anticipated (i.e., 31 budgeted retirements vs. 48 anticipated retirements). In comparison, as of April 29, 2020, the Office of Budget and Finance advised that of the 1,087 authorized positions, there were 10 vacant positions (8 uniformed and 2 civilian). The Department's proposed FY 2022 budget includes \$2.6 million for callback, an increase of \$1.1 million, or 74.5%, which the Department advised is due to the large volume of vacancies, which in turn, was caused by the hiring delays due to COVID-19.

# Recruitment

The Department advised that the COVID-19 pandemic directly contributed to the Department's delay in its ability to hire and fill vacancies; restrictions on large gatherings immobilized the Department's hiring process, and the local state of emergency delayed the written test portion of the recruit process. Additionally, the Department advised that it has been unable to create an eligibility list for the positions of Probationary Firefighter (PFF) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). The Department advised that in April 2021, it commenced a 26-week probationary firefighter (PFF) recruit class; 31 recruits were hired and the total FY 2021 salary costs were \$220 thousand; FY 2022 costs for the April 2021 recruit class are estimated to total \$380 thousand.

Additionally, the proposed FY 2022 budget includes \$1.3 million in salaries for two recruit classes as follows:

- \$858 thousand for a 10-week Accelerated Probationary EMT class of 34 to commence in December 2021, with an anticipated graduation date of February 2022; and
- \$422 thousand for a 26-week Probationary Firefighter class of 35 to commence in February 2022, with an anticipated graduation date of August 2022.

#### Proposed New 3-Year Back-DROP – No Effect for FY 2022

The recently ratified agreement between the Administration and the Baltimore County Professional Fire Fighters Association, IAFF 1311 for Fiscal Years 2022/2023, notes that the County is prepared to implement and offer in FY 2022 a second Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP), a 3-year Back-DROP to members employed by the County on and after July 1, 2007. The offer is conditioned on the deduction of an additional 0.78 of base pay as the retirement contribution rate, to commence during FY 2022. This negotiated change will require a separate vote by those eligible (hired on/after July 1, 2007 and currently employed) members, and if accepted, will require legislative approval by the County Council. The Department advised that the new DROP benefit does not result in any immediate fiscal impact to the County, since members would not realize the benefit until retirement.

#### Title Changes

On April 5, 2021, the Council approved Bill 31-21, which changed the following titles: Fire Directors will become Bureau Chiefs and Division Fire Chiefs will become Deputy Chiefs. There

are 13 positions affected by this change. The Office of Budget and Finance advised that there is no fiscal impact associated with this change.

On March 15, 2021, the Council approved a contract with FACETS Consulting, LLC totaling \$135 thousand to complete an operational review of the Department, including a report on the current state of the Department, forecasted demands, and recommended strategies to meet the future needs of the Department and the County's residents.

# The Department should be prepared to discuss:

- The need for the proposed new contractual arrangement for a Medical Director given the County's practice of having an on-call medical director (budgeted in monthly salary).
- The reason for instituting a new Paramedic First Class EMS position, the plans to reorganize the rank structure and assignment of EMS personnel, and any further organizational changes planned;
- Recruitment and retention challenges, as well as strategies that will enable vacancies to be filled more expeditiously;
- The benefits of offering a 3-year Back-DROP; and
- The status of the consultant study.

# 2. Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Operations

The Department advised that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on its operations, including increases in personnel leave use and increased workload. The Department advised that its workload also includes oversight of PPE (procurement, storage and distribution), the Social Distancing Task Force, and COVID-19 donation coordination. Additionally, the EMS Division's workload was expanded to include responding to exposure notifications, field guides/clinical best practices, and testing. The Department also advised that providing vaccination and testing support has resulted in its frontline personnel being unable to work the usual overtime, causing higher rank, more expensive personnel to receive callback.

The Department projects it will revert \$2.4 million to the General Fund at the end of FY 2021, due to lower salaries and vehicle/motor pool costs than anticipated by the budget. In addition, the Department advised that it has leveraged approximately \$4.8 million in COVID-19 grant funds

to support unexpected expenses, including labor for hours worked at testing sites, other salaries (overtime, callback hours, and essential pay), and equipment costs, and that it also was awarded a \$1.0 million Assistance to Firefighter Grant for COVID-19 related expenses.

The Department should be prepared to discuss its plans for transitioning back to "normal" operations, as well as any changes that will be continued after the pandemic.

#### 3. Turnout Gear - Year 2 of 3-Year Initiative

The proposed FY 2022 budget includes \$861 thousand for the purchase of 225 sets of turnout gear to provide a second set of turnout gear for career personnel; FY 2022 is the second year of a 3-year initiative to ensure constant availability of clean gear to all field personnel, and to support the Department's goal of reducing exposure to carcinogens for all personnel. The Department previously advised that the initiative will cost approximately \$2.7 million, and the MOU requires it to be provided within the current County Executive's 4-year term. The Department's FY 2021 budget included \$860,800 for the purchase of 269 sets; the Department advised that to date, 225 sets have been ordered of which 125 have been received and distributed.

The Department should be prepared to discuss its distribution plans for the remainder of the FY 2021 sets and for the proposed sets, and whether it is on track to complete this initiative as planned.

#### 4. Capital Projects

The proposed FY 2022 Capital Budget includes \$23.1 million for the following projects:

- Sparrows Point Fire Station and Police Substation (\$16.0 million) The Office of Budget
  and Finance advised that the timeframe for construction has not been determined;
  however, over the next couple months, the Fire Department and the Property
  Management Division will be working together to discuss the project details, including a
  timeline.
- Washer and dryer installations (to remove carcinogens from turnout gear) at 16 fire stations (\$4.5 million) The Office of Budget and Finance advised that the following 16 career stations will receive commercial grade washer and dryer installations, which are designed to remove harmful carcinogens from protective turnout gear (pants and coats)

without damage to the gear, during FY 2022.

Pikesville	Golden Ring
Woodlawn	Texas
Dundalk	Garrison
Edgemere	Chase
Parkville	Perry Hall
Middle River	Franklin
Brooklandville	Sparrows Point
Eastview	Parkton

The Office further advised that the FY 2021 installations (\$2.0 million appropriation for 10 stations) were delayed due to the complexity of the building modifications that were required to make the installations; however, installations at Hillendale and Westview are nearing completion.

- Volunteer Fire Company Grant Fund (\$1.5 million) The Department advised that the proposed FY 2022 funds, along with the current \$600 thousand available balance from the FY 2020 appropriation (no appropriation was made for FY 2021), are planned for the following projects:
  - ➤ Essex Volunteer Fire Department renovate existing facility to bring it up to code and provide adequate space for apparatus;
  - Hereford Volunteer Fire Department replace HVAC and engine bay roof;
  - ➤ Liberty Road Volunteer Fire Department renovate operational area; and
  - ➤ Glyndon Volunteer Fire Department add bays onto the station to house modern day apparatus rather than purchasing apparatus customized to fit into existing bays and to renovate to allow for living areas for members.
- <u>Land acquisition for a new Catonsville Fire Station (\$1.0 million)</u> The Office of Budget and Finance advised that the Fire Department and the Property Management Division have had discussions over the last few months to begin addressing needs.
- Completion of the female locker room in the Fullerton Fire Station (\$128 thousand)

The Department should be prepared to discuss the plans/timeframes for commencing and completing these projects, as well as the cost and other factors involved in the washer and dryer installations at the stations.

#### BALTIMORE COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET ANALYSIS

#### FIRE DEPARTMENT (016)

APPROPRIATION DETAIL									
		FY 2020 ACTUAL	FY 2021 APPROP	FY 2022 REQUEST	NET CHA	NGE %			
General Fund			, , , , , , , ,						
1601	General Administration	\$ 1,181,448	\$ 1,542,957	\$ 1,716,891	\$ 173,934	11.3%			
1602	Investigative Services	1,656,442	1,708,744	1,860,908	152,164	8.9%			
1603	Alarm & Communication System	549,899	749,407	763,370	13,963	1.9%			
1604	Field Operations	88,485,797	90,354,712	93,235,338	2,880,626	3.2%			
1605	Office of Homeland Security/ Emergency Management	155,839	248,821	253,239	4,418	1.8%			
1606	Field Operation Administration	1,887,456	2,076,627	2,401,349	324,722	15.6%			
1607	Fire/Rescue Academy	1,099,374	1,292,295	1,373,818	81,523	6.3%			
1610	Contributions Volunteer Fire	9,560,422	10,177,967	10,569,974	392,007	3.9%			
	General Fund Total	\$ 104,576,677	\$ 108,151,530	\$ 112,174,887	\$ 4,023,357	3.7%			
Special Fund									
FDGRANT21	Homeland Security	244,701	220,000	225,901	5,901	2.7%			
FDGRANT25	MIEMSS Advanced Life Support Training	10,997	25,000	25,000	-	0.0%			
FDGRANT27	Waterway DNR/WIG	-	10,000	30,000	20,000	200.0%			
FDGRANT30	Active Threat & Active Assailant	10,505	50,000	-	(50,000)	-100.0%			
FDGRANT31	HSGP	289,807	491,000	485,934	(5,066)	-1.0%			
FDGRANT32	FEMA - Assistance to the Firefighters	-	374,637	307,812	(66,825)	-17.8%			
FDGRANT40	HMEP	-	12,000	12,000	-	0.0%			
FDGRANT41	SAFER	854,017	369,576	-	(369,576)	-100.0%			
FDGRANT42	SAFER20	428,068	1,484,000	1,484,000	-	0.0%			
FDGRANT44	MIEMSS AED/Defibrillator	65,999	45,000	45,000	-	0.0%			
FDGRANT45	Assistance to Firefighters	-	410,000	205,000	(205,000)	-50.0%			
FDGRANT46	Emergency Management Performance Grant	47,634	290,000	290,000	-	0.0%			
FDGRANT91	Fire Department Support	-	-	50,000	50,000	NA			
FDGRANTC1	EMPG COVID19	91,180	-	-	-	NA			
FDGRANTCV	Cares Act Provider Relief Fund	988,601	-	-	-	NA			
FDGRANTC2	FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant - COVID-19 Supplemental (AFG-S)	-	1,000,000	-	(1,000,000)	-100.0%			
FDGRANT48	MEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (HMGP)		23,550		(23,550)	-100.0%			
	Special Fund Total	3,031,509 <sup>(A)</sup>	4,804,763 (E	3,160,647	(1,644,116)	-34.2%			
	Total All Funds	\$ 107,608,186	\$ 112,956,293	\$ 115,335,534	\$ 2,379,241	2.1%			

<sup>(</sup>A) Reflects audited expenditures \$1,905,608 greater than the amount reflected in the Executive's budget documents.

<sup>(</sup>B) Increased for three supplemental appropriations totaling \$1.4 million not reflected in the Executive's budget documents.

#### BALTIMORE COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET ANALYSIS

#### FIRE DEPARTMENT (016)

		PEF	RSONNEL DE	ETAIL					
		FY 2020 ACTUAL		TUAL APPROI		FY 20 REQUE	EST	NET CHAN	GE
General Fund		FULL	PART	FULL	PART	FULL	PART	FULL	PART
1601	General Administration	13	3	14	4	15	4	1	0
1602 li	nvestigative Services	18	0	17	0	18	0	1	0
1603 A	Alarm & Communication System	3	0	5	0	5	0	0	0
1604 F	Field Operations	1,000	0	1,016	0	1,016	0	0	0
	Office of Homeland Security/ Emergency Management	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
1606 F	Field Operation Administration	17	0	18	0	20	0	2	0
1607 F	Fire/Rescue Academy	11	1	12	0	12	0	0	0
1610	Contributions Volunteer Fire	2	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
C	General Fund Total	1,066	4_	1,087	4	1,091	4	4	0
Special Fund									
FDGRANT21 H	Homeland Security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	MIEMSS Advanced Life Support Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT27 V	Waterway DNR/WIG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT30 A	Active Threat & Active Assailant Program	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT31 H	HSGP	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
FDGRANT32 F	FEMA - Assistance to the Firefighters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT40 H	HMEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT41 S	SAFER	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT42	SAFER20	0	0	28	0	28	0	0	0
FDGRANT44	MIEMSS AED/Defibrillator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT45	Assistance to Firefighters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT46	Emergency Management Performance Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT91 F	Fire Department Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANTC1 E	EMPG COVID19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANTCV C	Cares Act Provider Relief Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant - COVID 19 Supplemental (AFG-S)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDGRANT48	MEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (HMGP)	0	0	0	0	0	0_	0	0
5	Special Fund Total	16	1	28	1	28	11	0	0
Т	Total All Funds	1,082	5	1,115	5	1,119	5	4	0